OPINION

Guest Editorial

A time for reflection

By S. ROBERT POWELL

In 1680, William Penn – the son of Sir William Penn, an admiral in the royal navy who at his death left a claim of 16,000 pounds against the government of Great Britain – petitioned Charles II of England for a grant of a tract of land, west from the Delaware River, in liquidation of the claim he had inherited from his father. In 1681, on March 4 (presently March 14th, due to calendar changes), Charles II signed the charter granting to William Penn the following tract of land (present-day Pennsylvania): three degrees of latitude in breadth by five degrees of longitude in length, the eastern boundary to be the Delaware River, the northern boundary to begin on the three and fortieth degreee of north latitude.

On the 300th anniversary of the granting of that charter, an 18-month long celebration, entitled "Celebration of Friends," took place in Pennsylvania. Those tercentenary celebrations have just now ended. It is, therefore, altogether fitting and proper that we, as citizens of northeastern Pennsylvania, and, therefore, in the broadest sense of the term, as legatees of William Penn, not only think about the material and non-material inheritance that is ours, but also examine our state and ourselves, and ask ourselves the following questions:

What is the physical state of the Commonwealth, in general, and of northeastern Pennsylvania, in particular? In what condition is our land? our air? our water? Will the physical environment that we bequeath to our children be equal to-better than-worse than the one that we inherited from our parents? What is the quality of life in our towns? in our cities? on our farms? Is northeastern Pennsylvania a better place in which to live now than it was in the past?

What is the mental state of the Commonwealth, in general, and of northeastern Pennsylvania, in particular? Are we, as a social order, optimistic? complacent? self-righteous? altruistic? pioneering? tolerant? honest? What are the principles in which we presently believe? What are the principles in which we no longer believe? What is the state of health of our social institutions? our religious institutions? our economic institutions? our political institutions?

What do we know of ourselves? What would our ancestors think of us? What will our grandchildren think of us? What do we know of our world? What would our ancestors think of our world? What will our grandchildren think of our world? What have we learned about ourselves and our world in the past 302 years? What have we fotgotten about ourselves and our world in the past 302 years?

Those are the questions that we as citizens of northeastern Pennsylvania must ask ourselves on this the occasion of the 302nd anniversary of the establishment of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Those are the questions that we as citizens of northeastern Pennsylvania must continually ask ourselves.